Message Text

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ACTION OPIC-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-11 TRSE-00 COME-00 AID-20

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R 270425Z APR 74 FM AMEMBASSY KABUL TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7679

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E.O. 11652:NA TAGS: EFIN, AF

SUBJ: YAQUB LEATHER INDUSTRIES PROJECT

REF: STATE 083991

PASS OPIC AND GENESCO

- 1. EMBOFF HAS SPOKEN WITH BOTH YAQUBS AND GOA OFFICIALS. DIFFICULTY IS DEFINITION OF QUOTE SEMI-FINISHED LEATHER UNQUOTE. APPLICATION FOR TAX EXEMPT EXPORT WAS FOR QUOTE SEMI-FINISHED AND FINISHED LEATHER UNQUOTE, AND WHAT YLI IS NOW PRODUCING IS QUOTE PICKLED SKINS UNQUOTE. ACCORDING TO GOA CUSTOMS, PICKLED SKINS ARE NOT SEMI-FINISHED LEATHER. UNTIL IT HAS REACHED THE QUOTE WET-BLUE UNQUOTE STAGE, IT IS STILL SKINS, NOT LEATHER.
- 2. GOA HAS NOT PROHIBITED EXPORT OF THIS CURRENT PRODUCTION. CUSTOMS HOWVER, STATING THAT YLI HAS TAX EXEMPTION ONLY FOR FINISHED AND SEMI-FINISHED LEATHER, INSISTS ON PAYMENT OF EXPORT TAX OF APPROXIMATELY 6.5 AFGHANIS (ELEVEN CENTS) PER SKIN.
- 3. YAQUBS HAVE SENT LETTER TO MINISTRY OF MINES AND INDUSTRIES ASKING FOR A RULING ON DEFINITION OF SEMI-FINISHED. EMBASSY HAS TRANSLATED IT FOR THEM TO TRANSMIT COPY TO GENESCO. YUNUS RAFIQ RETURNS TO KABUL TOMORROW, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE FINAL DECISION.

4. EVEN IF RULING AGREES WITH CUSTOMS, YAQUBS ARE FREE TO EXPORT PICKLED SKINS. LACK OF EXEMPTION WILL, HOWEVER, REDUCE PROFITABILITY UNTIL THEY ARE ABLE TO MOVE UP TO NEXT STEP IN LEATHER PROCESSING. FYI. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT COMMON INTERPRETATION OF THESE TERMS IN AFGHANISTAN AGREES WITH CUSTOMS. MAJOR POINT IN GOA APPROVING YLI WAS LACK OF LEATHER PROCESSING FACILITIES, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PICKLING PLANTS. END FYI. ELIOT

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